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Letters to the Editor

"Keating on Cuba"

Reference is made to the Feb. 20 letter by Representative Stratton taking exception to Walter Lippmann's kind appraisal of Senator Keating's statements on Cuba.

Senator Keating has, since the beginning of 1960, when a Republican President was in office, been calling for a reappraisal of United States policies toward Cuba. Unlike some overenthusiastic partisans of this Administration, he did not then and has not since sought to make Cuba a political issue. His objective has been to make public the need which unfortunately still exists for a consistent, coherent policy toward Cuba and official Government recognition of the dangers inherent in the present situation.

Senator Keating's efforts have been publicly commended by such respected members of Congress as Senators Cooper and Stennis, and Congressman Lindsay, whose judgments are clearly not warped by partisan considerations and who have themselves made substantial contributions to public understanding of the dangers.

Senator Keating's statements over the last month have been primarily directed to pointing out the threat of the Soviet base in Cuba for the rest of Latin America. On Jan. 13, he stated, "Castro is ten times better equipped today than he was last spring." Subsequent revelations made with some reluctance by Government officials indicate that as far as Soviet troops are concerned, Castro

is over 30 times stronger, and that throughout the October

crisis, official U. S. estimates were at least 50 per cent below the true figure. As far as equipment is concerned, testimony before Congressional committees indicates that Senator Keating was equally conservative in his reckoning.

Senator Keating said on Jan. 31, "What the Soviets are planning to do—in fact they are already doing it—is to mount an increasing wave of sabotage, terrorism, political subversion, and agitation throughout Latin America. Already riots in Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, clearly and demonstrably are the work of Communists trained and armed in Cuba." This statement was fully supported and amplified on Feb. 19 in a 58-page report presented by the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, before the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Yet, immediately after Senator Keating spoke on Feb. 8, Defense Secretary McNamara, in a nationally televised appearance witnessed by millions, was asked specifically about the use of Cuba as a training base for subversion or sabotage. At that time, he replied firmly, "I have no evidence that Cuba is being used as a base for subversion directed against other Latin American countries."

Mr. Stratton should be reminded that Senator Keating has submitted a positive program of action to the President and has several times discussed the situation with Mr. McCone, Director of CIA, and offered additional information.

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